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## Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Brockton

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# Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas

## Brockton

by Phillip Granberry and Mayara Fontes

December, 2013

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THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE  
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND PUBLIC POLICY

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# Brockton

This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Brockton. It reflects a commitment by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy to provide periodic updates on the growing Latino population in Massachusetts. The report on Brockton is part of a larger series that covers cities and towns with a population between 35,000 and 100,000 residents in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a significant Latino population. Each report analyzes data from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. We obtained the data from the American Factfinder website in tabular form, and we transformed these data into figures presented in this report.

Brockton is considered a "Gateway City." These are midsized (35,000–250,000) cities in Massachusetts that were once industrial centers but have not transitioned economically to the same extent as cities with high-tech industries. They all rank below the statewide average in regard to both household income and educational attainment.

The Census Bureau identifies Latinos through a question that asks respondents to choose either "Hispanic or Latino" or "Not Hispanic or Latino." Separately, it asks respondents to identify a race. This report uses the term "Latino" to include all those who selected "Hispanic or Latino" on the Census form, regardless of racial designation.

## Notes

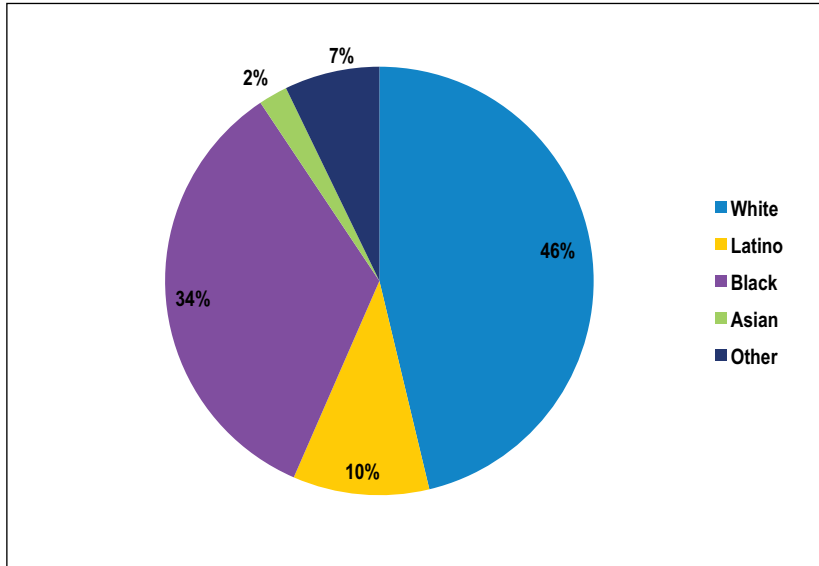
<sup>1</sup> The Census designation of black or African American alone is referenced as black. The category of Asian alone is referenced as Asian. The category of American Indian and Alaska Native alone is referenced as American Indian. A smaller "other" ethno-racial category is identified for the initial population estimate of Brockton and this consists of those who identified with multiple race categories or some other race.

The report compares Latinos, thus defined, to non-Latino whites, blacks, and Asians, based on individuals' racial identification.<sup>1</sup> The number of ethno-racial groups included in a particular analysis may vary each ethno-racial group is included in the analysis only when the observed sample size is large enough to produce reliable population estimates.

## THE LATINO POPULATION

As the seventh largest city of the Commonwealth, Brockton is home to an estimated 9,667 Latinos. They represent about one-tenth (10%) of the city's population, a smaller share than for whites and blacks but greater than for Asians (Figure 1). Brockton is also noted for having a significant population (7%) not in one of these four major ethno-racial categories.

Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Brockton

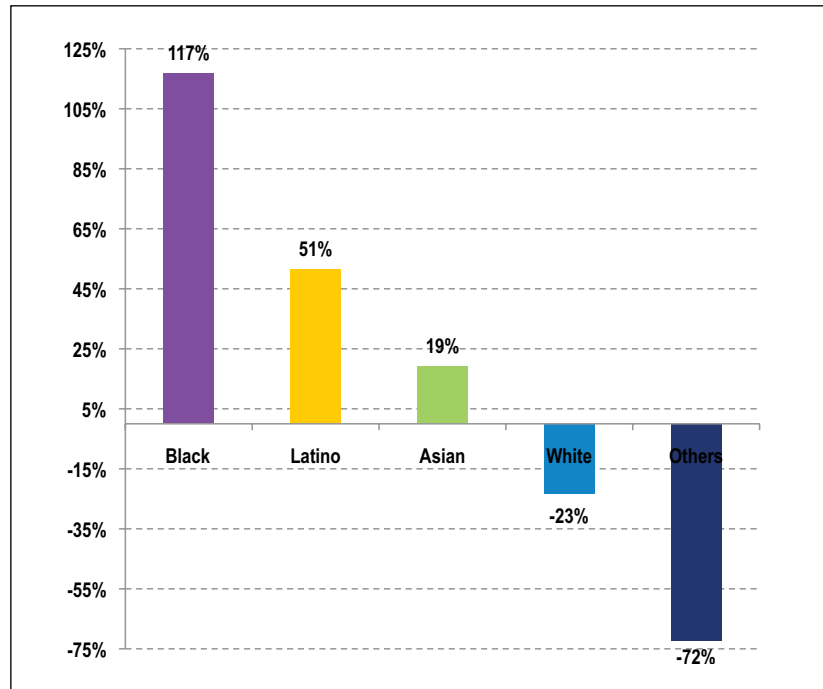


ACS Data - DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates (2007-2011)

Even though the total population of Brockton has remained almost steady over the past decade, there were significant differences in the growth of ethno-racial groups, as shown in Figure 2. A striking feature of Brockton's population change is the growth in its black and Latino populations (117% for blacks and 51% for Latinos, the same as the average Latino growth statewide). This is related to a significant decline in whites (23%), the city's largest ethno-racial group.

One of the possible reasons for this population growth of the non-white population is international migration. Brockton has long been a destination for international migrants, and today it has a greater concentration of foreign-born (24%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (15%).

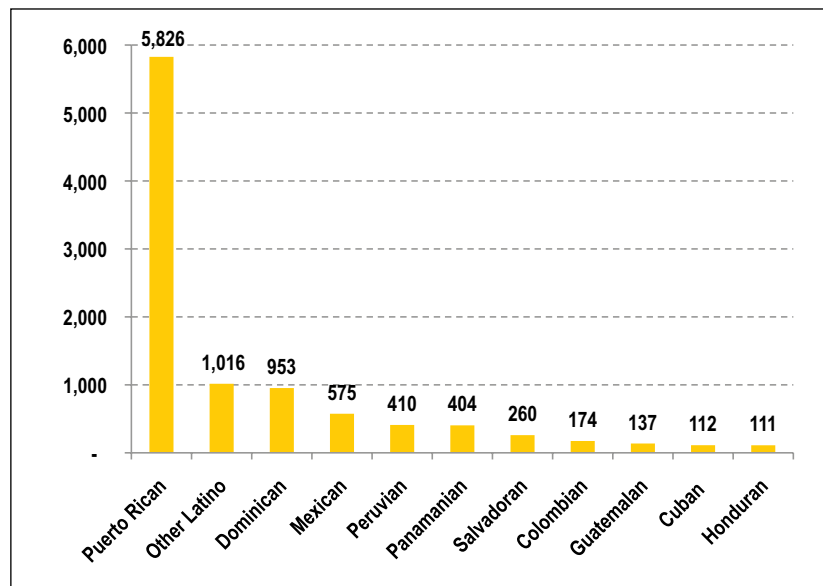
Figure 2: Population Change by Ethno-Racial Group from 2000 to 2011



ACS Data - DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates (2011) and 2000 Census Summary File 1

When examining the origin of Latinos in the Brockton, it is important to note that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens; they are not included in foreign-born estimates in the preceding paragraph. Figure 3 shows that Puerto Ricans, with a population of 5,826, constitute by far the largest Latino subpopulation in the city, followed by Dominicans (953), Mexicans (575), Peruvians (410), and Panamanians (404). An estimated 1,016 Latinos are from another country or are classified as “other Latino.”

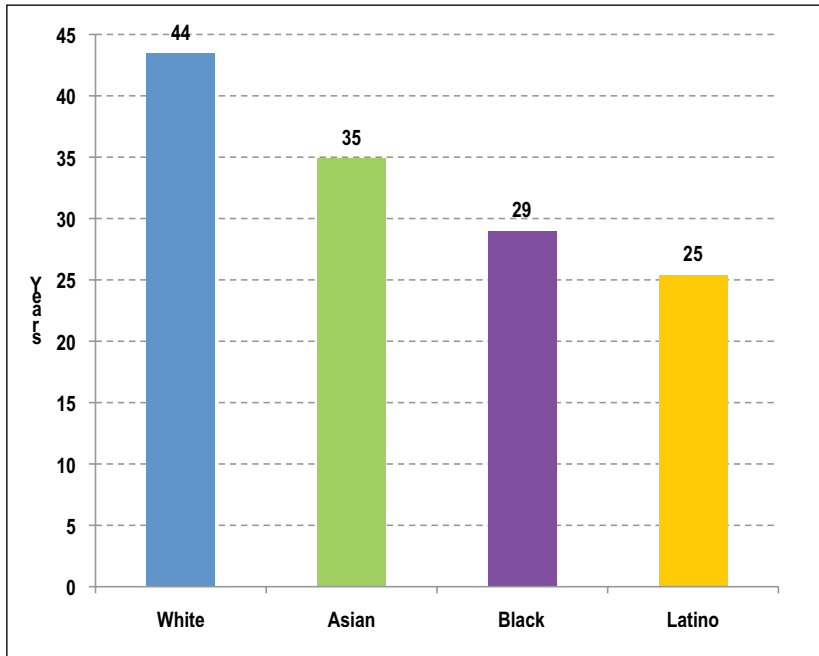
Figure 3: Ancestry of the Top Latino Subpopulations



ACS Data - B03001: Hispanic or Latino Origin by Specific Origin (2007-2011)

## MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

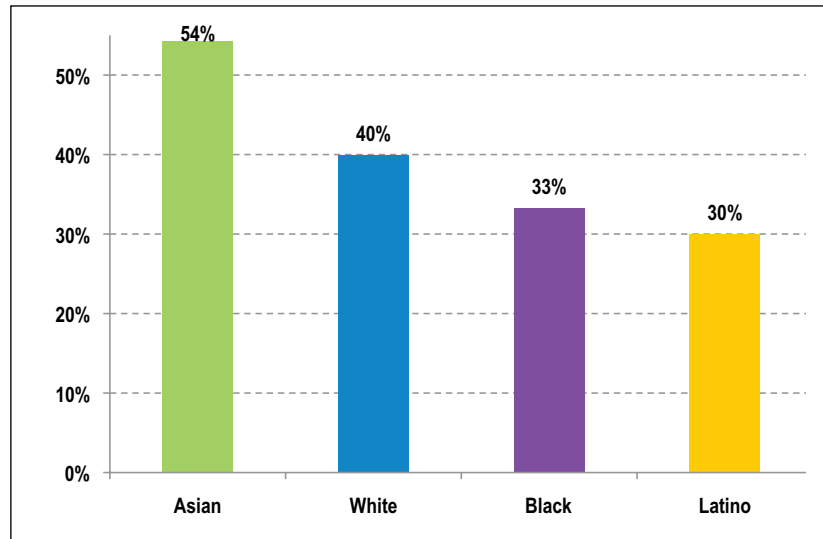
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



ACS Data - B01002: Median Age (2007-2011)

In Figure 4, Brockton's Latino population with a median age of 25 years is even younger than the statewide Latino median age of 26 years. Latinos are also much younger than the larger white population (median age 44 years, older than the state median of 39 years). As addressed in the Gastón Institute's educational report on Brockton, with half of their population under the age 25, Latinos are disproportionately represented in the Brockton Public Schools compared to their overall population size (Figure 1). They are also an important population for higher educational institutions in the region such as the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Bridgewater State University, and Bristol and Massasoit Community Colleges. If this younger population obtains the necessary educational attainment, these Latinos will serve as a strong complement to the older white population to keep the city's neighborhoods vibrant in the years to come.

Figure 5: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (15 Years and Older)



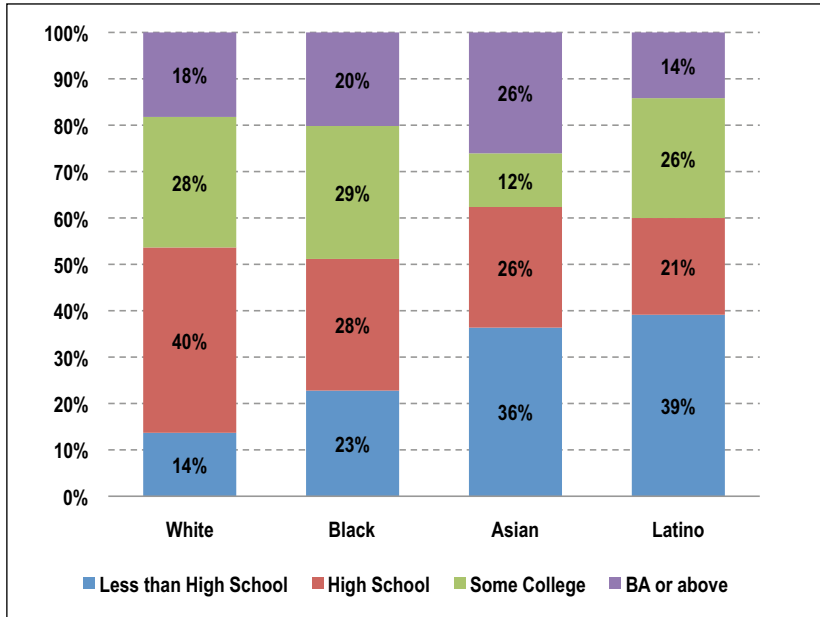
ACS Data - B12002: Marital Status (2007-2011)

The information in Figure 4 appears related to Figure 5. As might be predicted from the youthful Latino population of Brockton, the Latino marriage rate of 30% (for persons age 15 years and older) is lower than for any other ethno-racial group in the city. This same relationship exists statewide, as the marriage rate is 48% for the entire population but 33% for Latinos.

## EDUCATION

The educational attainment for all ethno-racial groups is low in Brockton: only 18% of Brockton residents 25 and older have a bachelor's degree, compared to 39% statewide. Recalling the median age in Figure 4, nearly half of the 9,667 Latinos are not accounted for in this educational attainment estimate because their median age is 25 years. Latinos below that age are in a period of their life set aside for increasing educational attainment, and they can alter the troubling trend highlighted below. Figure 6 shows that Latinos have the highest percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 39%, compared to 36% for Asians, 23% for blacks, and 14% for whites. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 14%, compared to 18% for whites, 20% for blacks, and 26% for Asians.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group (Adults 25 Years and Older)

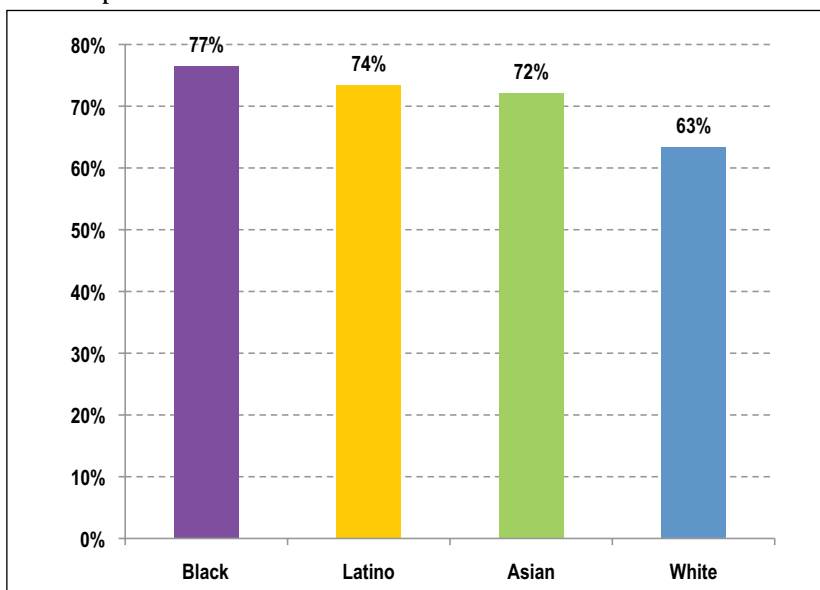


ACS Data - B15002: Educational Attainment (2009-2011)

## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Latinos in Brockton have a higher labor force participation rate (74%) than Latinos statewide (70%). Blacks have the highest labor force participation in the city (77%). The Latino labor force participation may be related to previously identified characteristics of a youthful population (Figure 4) with a higher proportion of Latinos being in their late teens or early twenties and in many cases still in school or providing dependent care for young children (Figure 6).

Figure 7: Labor Force Participation among Individuals 16 to 64 Years of Age by Ethno-Racial Group

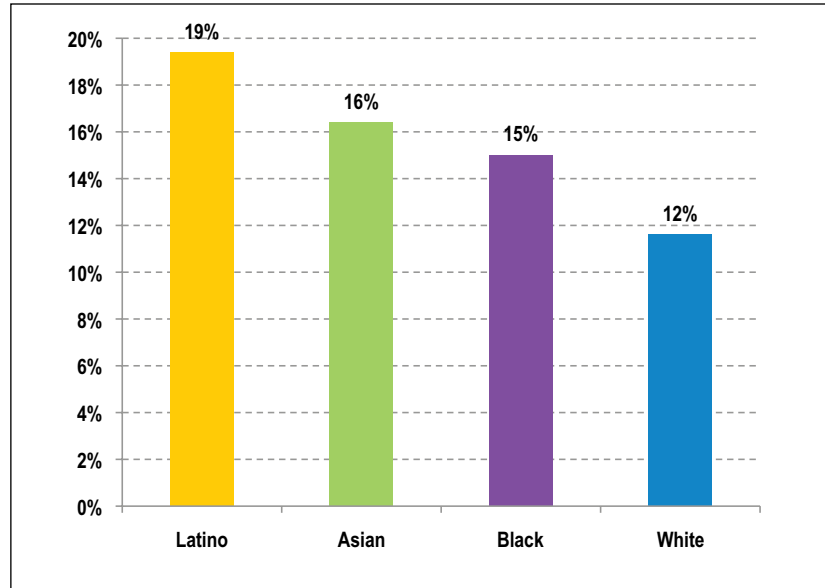


ACS Data - C23002: Employment Status (2007-2011)



The overall unemployment rate in Brockton during this period was high: 10% compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 8%. The high unemployment in the city is consistent with that of other Gateway Cities in the Commonwealth. Latinos have the highest unemployment rate of any ethno-racial group at 19% (Figure 8). This is a higher unemployment rate than for Latinos statewide (13%).

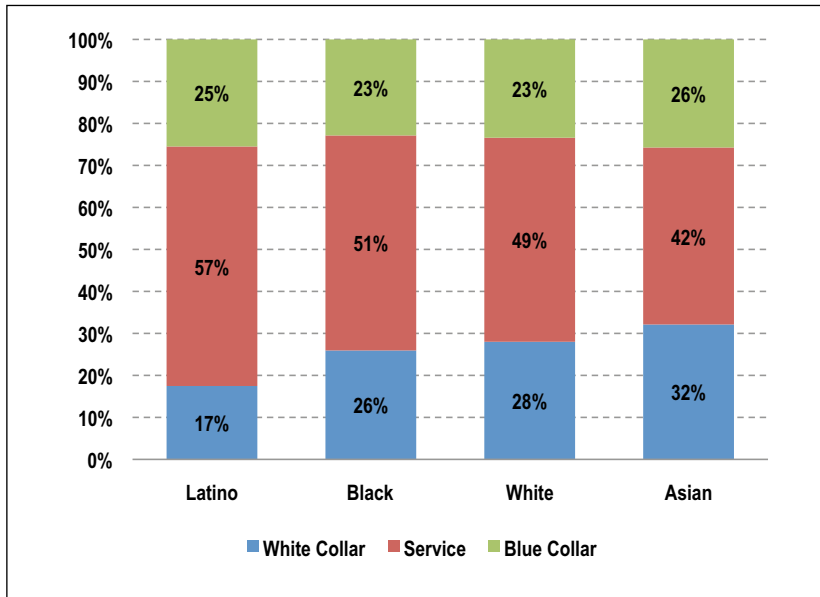
**Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group**



ACS Data - C23002: Employment Status (2007-2011)

Figure 9 highlights that Latinos work in traditionally low-wage jobs. Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs (with only 18% working in these management, business, science, and arts occupations) nearly overrepresented in the service sector with 57% working in services and sales occupations. Twenty-five percent work in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs: natural resources, construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group

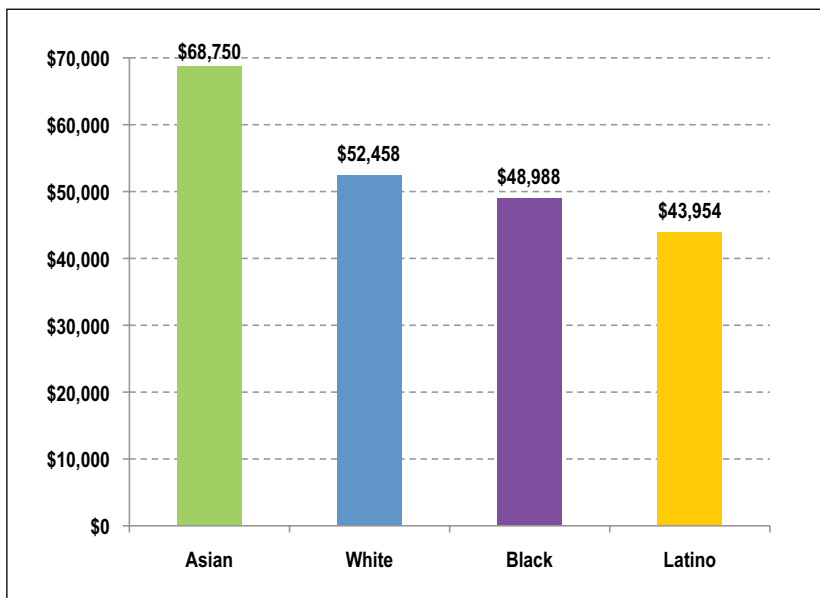


ACS Data - C24010: Occupation for the Civilian Labor Force (2007-2009)

## EARNINGS

Highlighting the economic problems that Brockton has experienced as a Gateway City in Massachusetts, the median household income for the city is \$49,848, which is significantly lower than the statewide median of \$65,981. As the previous occupational distribution suggested, Latinos in Figure 10 have the lowest median household income \$43,954 of any ethno-racial group in the city. However, Latinos in Brockton are more economically successful than Latinos in other parts of the Commonwealth, as the statewide Latino median is \$33,723.

Figure 10: Median Household Income by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010

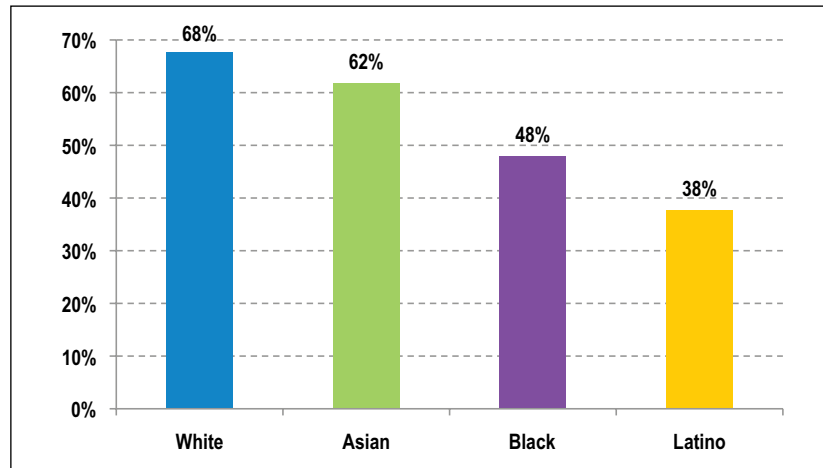


ACS Data - S1903: Median Income in the Past 12 Months (2007-2011)

## HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL UNINSURANCE

The final measures of Latino participation in Brockton are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Brockton has a lower homeownership rate (58%) than the statewide rate (64%) as measured by occupied housing units. Latinos in Figure 11 have the lowest homeownership level of any ethno-racial group in the city at 38%, but this is significantly higher than the 26% of Latinos statewide who are homeowners. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 62% of Latinos in Brockton are renters.

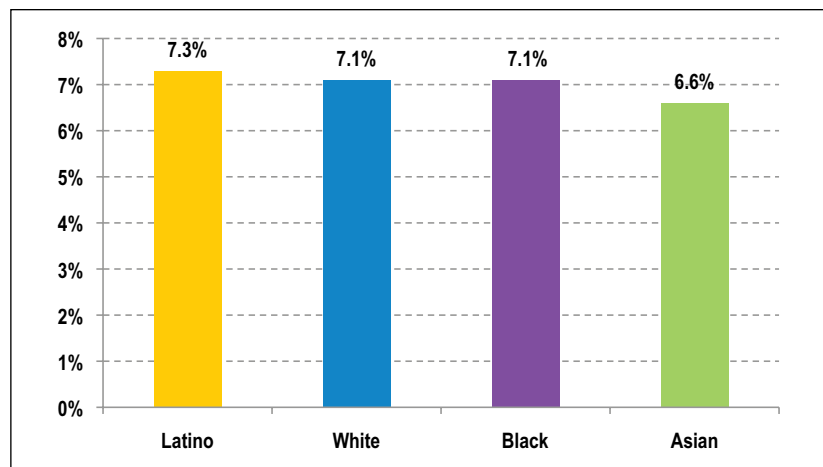
**Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group**



ACS Data - B25003: Tenure (2007-2011)

Brockton has a higher rate of medical uninsurance (6.9%) than the statewide average of 4.2%. Some of this might be attributed to its high concentration of foreign-born residents, since non-citizens have higher rates of uninsurance. No matter what the explanation is, Brockton has not benefitted from the 2006 Massachusetts health care reform law as much as other cities. However, the uninsurance rate among Brockton Latinos, while higher than for other racial-ethnic groups in the city, is lower than the 9.5% rate for Latinos statewide.

**Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group**



ACS Data - S2701: Health Insurance Coverage Status (2009-2011)

The **Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston** conducts research on and for the Latino population in New England. Our goal is to generate the information and analysis necessary to develop more inclusive public policy and to improve Latino participation in the policy making process. In an effort to present vital information about Latinos to diverse audiences, the Gastón Institute has produced this series of demographic profiles for selected Massachusetts areas based on an analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Our descriptive analysis uses ACS data to estimate population size and characteristics in order to compare Latinos to other ethno-racial groups. Technically, these groups are designated as non-Latino whites, non-

Latino blacks, and non-Latino Asians though they are often referenced simply as “white,” “black,” and “Asian” in these profiles.

The Gastón Institute plans to update this series of demographic profiles for selected Massachusetts areas every five years upon release of American Community Survey data. A similar report series examining Latino populations at the city level is planned for the 2015 Gastón Institute public policy conference. In addition, demographic profiles highlighting Latino sub-groups will be produced on an ongoing basis.

One of the goals of the Gastón Institute is to be responsive to the needs of the Latino and policy communities through the research we undertake. Please feel free to contact us with suggestions or requests for specific information.

## About the Authors

**Phillip Granberry** is a social demographer who specializes in immigrants in the US. He worked with various community-based organizations assisting recently arrived U.S. immigrants before earning a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Boston. He has published several articles on the accumulation and use of social capital among Mexican migrants and the impact of welfare and immigration policy reform on Latinos in Massachusetts. Currently a Research Associate for the Gastón Institute, he also teaches courses on international migration and urban affairs for the UMass Boston Economics Department.

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